

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7128

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 3988

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, KE

SUBJECT: KANU ELECTION DAY APPROACHES

REF: (A) NAIROBI 3722, (B) NAIROBI 3494, (C) NAIROBI 3358,

(D) NAIROBI 3130

1. SUMMARY: AFTER MONTHS OF PRELIMINARY ELECTIONS AND MANEUVERING THE KANU REVITALIZATION PROCESS WILL CULMINATE APRIL 3 IN THE FIRST ELECTION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS SINCE 1966. BARRING UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS, VICE PRESIDENT MOI AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE EXPECTED TO TRIUMPH AND FINANCE MINISTER KIBAKI WILL EMERGE AS HEIR APPARENT TO KIKUYU LEADERSHIP. WHILE THE ELECTIONS WILL NOT RESOLVE ALL POLITICAL CONFLICTS IN KENYA, THEY REPRESENT A BIG STEP FORWARD IN THE EFFORT TO LEGITIMIZE AND INSTITUTIONALIZE THE SUCCESSION. END SUMMARY.

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2. KANU VICE PRESIDENCY: BEYOND ANY REASONABLE DOUBT VICE PRESIDENT MOI HAS ENOUGH SUPPORT TO DEFEAT EDUCATION MINISTER TOWEETT FOR THE PARTY VICE PRESIDENCY. THE ONLY REMAINING DOUBT CONCERNS THE STATUS OF FORMER KENYAN VICE PRESIDENT OGINGA ODINGA'S CANDIDACY. AS REPORTED REF A, ODINGA WAS BARRED FROM CANDIDACY BY

KANU ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL MATANO (A MOI ALLY). ODINGA, HOWEVER, HAS APPEALED MATANO'S RULING TO PRESIDENT KENYATTA IN HIS CAPACITY AS KANU PRESIDENT. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT KENYATTA WILL OVERRULE MATANO'S DECISION. DESPITE THE HOPES OF THE KIKUYU GROUP AROUND HIM, AND THE LUOS LOYAL TO ODINGA, KENYATTA HAS NOT LIFTED A FINGER THROUGHOUT THE ELECTION PROCESS TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME. EVEN IF HE (KENYATTA) DOES OVERRULE MATANO AND PERMIT ODINGA TO STAND, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE ODINGA CAN MUSTER SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO CHALLENGE MOI SERIOUSLY GIVEN THE IMPEDIMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN PLACED REPEATEDLY IN HIS PATH.

3. THE HIGH COURT IS CURRENTLY CONSIDERING PETITION BROUGHT BY ODINGA'S SUPPORTERS TO INVALIDATE DECEMBER SIAYA BRANCH KANU ELECTION (REF B) ON GROUNDS OF FRAUD, AND TO ISSUE INJUNCTION PREVENTING BRANCH OFFICERS CHOSEN IN DECEMBER FROM REPRESENTING BRANCH AT APRIL 3 NATIONAL ELECTION. EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW IF HIGH COURT DECISION WILL BE HANDED DOWN PRIOR TO APRIL 3, OR WHAT PRACTICAL EFFECT WOULD BE SHOULD VERDICT FAVOR ODINGA'S GROUP.

4. CHAIRMANSHIP: TO DATE, NEITHER FINANCE MINISTER KIBAKI NOR DEFENSE MINISTER GICHURU HAS ABANDONED THE RACE IN INTEREST OF PRESENTING SINGLE KIKUYU CANDIDATE WITH UNANIMOUS SUPPORT. FACT THAT KIBAKI HAS NOT YET PULLED OUT IN FAVOR OF THE ELDER GICHURU IS INDICATION THAT, SHORT OF PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENT KENYATTA, HE

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IS UNLIKELY TO DO SO. SHOULD BOTH MEN STAND, KIBAKI WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY WIN. WHILE KIKUYUS WOULD BE DIVIDED, KIBAKI IS FAR STRONGER AMONG OTHER TRIBES. MOST BRANCH CAUCUSES WHICH HAVE CALLED PUBLICLY FOR ELECTION OF MOI HAVE ALSO VOICED SUPPORT FOR KIBAKI.

5. OTHER SEATS: PICTURE WITH RESPECT TO OTHER SEATS ON KANU NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS LESS CLEAR. A TACIT UNDERSTANDING HAS EMERGED THAT DIVERSE ETHNIC REPRESENTATION ON THE COMMITTEE MUST BE ASSURED. THUS, THE RESULTS OF BALLOTING FOR EACH POST WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON SUCCEEDING ONES. THE POLITICS OF ETHNIC REPRESENTATION THUS PROMISE TO BE AS IMPORTANT A FACTOR AS ALLIANCE WITH PRO-MOI OR ANTI-MOI GROUPS. NEVERTHELESS, WHILE ANTI-MOI GROUP HAS LARGELY SPLINTERED, PRO-MOI GROUP HAS RETAINED DEGREE OF COHESION. AT THIS POINT MOI'S CLOSE ALLIES MATANO AND MUNOKO ARE CONSIDERED FAVORITES IN RACES FOR SECRETARY GENERAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZING

SECRETARY RESPECTIVELY. POSITIONS OF ASSISTANT
SECRETARY GENERAL, ASSISTANT NATIONAL ORGANIZING
SECRETARY, TREASURER AND ASSISTANT TREASURER REMAIN
UP FOR GRABS.

6. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS PERHAPS PREMATURE TO ANALYZE
THE RESULTS OF THE KANU NATIONAL ELECTIONS BEFORE THEY
ARE HELD, SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN.
THESE ELECTIONS PROVIDE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY FOR
NATIONWIDE, INSTITUTIONALIZED NATIONAL POLITICAL
CONFLICT IN KENYA SINCE THE OPPOSITION PARTY, KENYA
PEOPLE'S UNION, WAS BANNED IN 1969. WHEN THE ELECTIONS
ARE COMPLETED, THE MECHANISM FOR SELECTING A SUCCESSOR
TO PRESIDENT KENYATTA WILL FINALLY BE IN PLACE AND
THIS SHOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE CHANCES OF AN ORDERLY,
PEACEFUL SUCCESSION. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE PREDICTED
EMERGENCE OF KIBAKI AS A NATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURE WILL
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BE MOST SALUTORY. PERHAPS THE MOST INTELLIGENT,
EXPERIENCED LEADER IN KENYA AFTER KENYATTA, HE WILL BE
WELL PLACED TO MINIMIZE TRIBAL TENSIONS AND HELP GUIDE
KENYA THROUGH THE SUCCESSION.

7. DESPITE THIS OPTIMISTIC ASSESSMENT, UNCERTAINTIES
AND POLITICAL CONFLICT WILL REMAIN. MANY KENYANS
BELIEVE THAT HATRED AND FEAR OF VP MOI IN KIAMBU
KIKUYU CIRCLES RUNS SO DEEP THAT NO MEASURE WOULD BE
TOO DRASTIC TO KEEP HIM FROM NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.
AND THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT CERTAIN KIAMBU
KIKUYU ELEMENTS HAVE THE STOMACH FOR POLITICAL
ASSASSINATION. SECONDLY, KENYA WILL EVENTUALLY
NEED TO FIND A WAY TO REINCORPORATE THE LUOS INTO
NATIONAL POLITICAL LIFE. NO LUO IS LIKELY TO WIN AN
IMPORTANT PARTY OFFICE AT THE APRIL 3 ELECTION,
ALTHOUGH THE LUOS ARE THE COUNTRY'S SECOND LARGEST
TRIBE. SO LONG AS ODINGA AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE PREVENTED
FROM PARTICIPATING IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS, KENYAN
DEMOCRACY IS FLAWED AND DISSIDENTS WILL HAVE A RALLYING
POINT WHICH COULD BECOME FAR MORE IMPORTANT WHEN
KENYATTA IS GONE. FINALLY, THE MOI-KIBAKI RELATIONSHIP
IS NOT COMPLETELY CLEAR. THE ASSUMPTION HAS BEEN
THAT KIBAKI WOULD NOT CHALLENGE MOI FOR THE NATIONAL
PRESIDENCY WHEN KENYATTA DIES BECAUSE HE BELIEVES
KENYA'S NEXT PRESIDENT SHOULD BE A NON-KIKUYU. BUT
PRESSED BY POWERFUL KIKUYU INTERESTS HE COULD CHANGE
HIS THINKING.
MARSHALL

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Message Attributes

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